

**Board of Behavioral Sciences  
Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist  
California Law and Ethics Examination Outline**

This document provides detailed information about the LMFT California Law and Ethics Examination, including a description of each content area, subarea and the associated task and knowledge statements. Each question in the examination is linked to this content.

| <b>Content Area</b>                              | <b>Percentage</b> |
|--|-------------------|
| <b><i>I. Law</i></b>                             | <b><i>40%</i></b> |
| A. Confidentiality, Privilege, and Consent       | 14%               |
| B. Limits to Confidentiality/ Mandated Reporting | 16%               |
| C. Legal Standards for Professional Practice     | 10%               |
| <b><i>II. Ethics</i></b>                         | <b><i>60%</i></b> |
| A. Professional Competence and Preventing Harm   | 18%               |
| B. Therapeutic Relationship                      | 27%               |
| C. Business Practices and Policies               | 15%               |

## LMFT Law and Ethics Examination Outline

### ***I. Law (40%) – This area assesses the candidate’s ability to identify and apply legal mandates to clinical practice.***

| <i>Section</i>   | <i>Task Statement</i>  | <i>Knowledge Statement</i>  |
|--|--|---|
| <b>IA. Confidentiality, Privilege, and Consent (14%)</b> | T1. Comply with legal requirements regarding the maintenance/dissemination of confidential information to protect client’s privacy.  | K1. Knowledge of laws regarding confidential communications within the therapeutic relationship.<br>K2. Knowledge of laws regarding the disclosure of confidential information to other individuals, professionals, agencies, or authorities.   |
|  | T2. Identify holder of privilege by evaluating client’s age, legal status, and/or content of therapy to determine requirements for providing treatment.                      | K3. Knowledge of laws regarding holder of privilege.<br>K4. Knowledge of laws regarding privileged communication.   |
|  | T3. Comply with legal requirements regarding the disclosure of privileged information to protect client’s privacy in judicial/legal matters.                                 | K4. Knowledge of laws regarding privileged communication.<br>K5. Knowledge of laws regarding the release of privileged information.<br>K6. Knowledge of legal requirements for responding to subpoenas and court orders.  |
|  | T4. Comply with legal requirements regarding providing treatment to minor clients.   | K1. Knowledge of laws regarding confidential communications within the therapeutic relationship.<br>K2. Knowledge of laws regarding the disclosure of confidential information to other individuals, professionals, agencies, or authorities.<br>K3. Knowledge of laws regarding holder of privilege.<br>K4. Knowledge of laws regarding privileged communication.<br>K7. Knowledge of legal criteria and requirements for providing treatment to minors. |
|  | T5. Maintain client records by adhering to legal requirements regarding documentation, storage, and disposal to protect the client’s privacy and/or the therapeutic process. | K8. Knowledge of laws regarding documentation of therapeutic services.<br>K9. Knowledge of laws pertaining to the maintenance/disposal of client records.   |
|  | T6. Respond to requests for records by adhering to applicable laws and regulations to protect client’s rights and/or safety.   | K10. Knowledge of laws pertaining to client’s access to treatment records.<br>K11. Knowledge of laws pertaining to the release of client records to other individuals, professionals, or third parties.   |
|  | T7. Provide services via information and communication technologies by complying with “telehealth” regulations.  | K12. Knowledge of laws regarding the consent to and delivery of services via information and communication technologies.  |
|  | T8. Comply with the Health Information Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) regulations as mandated by law.  | K13. Knowledge of legal requirements of the Health Information Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).  |

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|--|--|--|
| <b>IB. Limits to Confidentiality/<br/>Mandated Reporting<br/>(16%)</b> | T9. Report known or suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation of dependent adult client to protective authorities.   | K14. Knowledge of indicators of abuse, neglect, or exploitation of dependent adults.<br>K15. Knowledge of laws pertaining to the reporting of known or suspected incidents of abuse, neglect, or exploitation of dependent adults.   |
|  | T10. Report known or suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation of elderly client to protective authorities.  | K16. Knowledge of indicators of abuse, neglect, or exploitation of elderly clients.<br>K17. Knowledge of laws pertaining to the reporting of known or suspected incidents of abuse, neglect, or exploitation of elderly clients.   |
|  | T11. Report known or suspected abuse or neglect of a child or adolescent to protective authorities.  | K18. Knowledge of indicators of abuse/neglect of children and adolescents.<br>K19. Knowledge of laws pertaining to the reporting of known or suspected incidents of abuse/neglect of children and adolescents.   |
|  | T12. Comply with legal requirements regarding breaking confidentiality to protect the client in the presence of indicators of danger to self/others and/or grave disability. | K20. Knowledge of symptoms of mental impairment that may indicate the need for involuntary hospitalization.<br>K21. Knowledge of legal requirements for initiating involuntary hospitalization.<br>K22. Knowledge of laws regarding confidentiality in situations of client danger to self or others.                      |
|  | T13. Comply with legal requirements to report and protect when client expresses intent to cause harm to people or property.  | K23. Knowledge of methods/criteria to identify situations in which client poses a danger to others.<br>K24. Knowledge of laws pertaining to duty to protect when client indicates intent to cause harm.<br>K25. Knowledge of situations/conditions that constitute reasonable indicators of client’s intent to cause harm. |
|  | T14. Comply with legal requirements regarding privilege exceptions in client litigation or in response to breach of duty accusations.  | K26. Knowledge of laws regarding privilege exceptions in litigation involving client’s mental or emotional condition as raised by the client or client’s representative.<br>K27. Knowledge of laws regarding privilege exceptions in which client alleges breach of duty.  |
|  | T15. Comply with legal requirements regarding privilege exceptions in court-appointed and/or defendant-requested evaluation/therapy.   | K28. Knowledge of laws regarding privilege exceptions in court-appointed evaluation or therapy.<br>K29. Knowledge of laws pertaining to privilege exceptions in defendant-requested evaluation or therapy.   |
|  | T16. Comply with legal requirements regarding reporting instances of crime perpetrated against minor clients.  | K30. Knowledge of laws pertaining to the reporting of crimes perpetrated against a minor.<br>K31. Knowledge of laws regarding privilege exceptions in crime or tort involving minors.  |

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|--|--|---|
| <b>IC. Legal Standards for Professional Practice (10%)</b> | T17. Comply with laws regarding sexual contact, conduct, and relations between therapist and client to prevent harm to the client and/or the therapeutic relationship. | K32. Knowledge of laws regarding sexual conduct between therapist and client.<br>K33. Knowledge of legal requirements for providing client with the brochure <i>Professional Therapy Never Includes Sex</i> . |
|  | T18. Comply with legal parameters regarding scope of practice.   | K34. Knowledge of laws that define the scope of clinical practice.  |
|  | T19. Comply with legal parameters regarding professional conduct.  | K35. Knowledge of laws that define professional conduct for licensed practitioners.   |
|  | T20. Disclose fee structure prior to initiating therapy.   | K36. Knowledge of laws regarding disclosures required prior to initiating treatment.  |
|  | T21. Comply with legal regulations regarding providing treatment when interacting with third-party payers.   | K37. Knowledge of laws and regulations regarding third-party reimbursement.<br>K38. Knowledge of parity laws regarding the provision of mental health services.   |
|  | T22. Comply with laws regarding advertisement of services and professional qualifications.   | K39. Knowledge of laws regarding advertisement and dissemination of information regarding professional qualifications, education, and professional affiliations.  |
|  | T23. Comply with laws pertaining to the payment or acceptance of money or other consideration for referral of services.  | K40. Knowledge of legal requirements regarding payment or acceptance of money or other considerations for referral of services.   |

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| <i>Section</i>  | <i>Task Statement</i>  | <i>Knowledge Statement</i>  |
|---|--|---|
| <b>IIA. Professional Competence and Preventing Harm (18%)</b> | T24. Consult with other professionals and/or seek additional education, training, and/or supervision to address therapeutic issues that arise outside the therapist's scope of competence. | K41. Knowledge of limitations of professional experience, education, and training to determine issues outside scope of competence.<br>K42. Knowledge of situations that indicate a need for consultation with colleagues or other professionals.<br>K43. Knowledge of ethical standards regarding the protection of client rights when engaging in consultation/collaboration with other professionals.<br>K44. Knowledge of ethical methods of developing additional areas of practice or expanding competence.<br>K45. Knowledge of the ethical responsibility to remain current in developments in the profession. |
|   | T25. Consult with other professionals to address questions regarding ethical obligations or practice responsibilities that arise during therapy.   | K42. Knowledge of situations that indicate a need for consultation with colleagues or other professionals.<br>K43. Knowledge of ethical standards regarding the protection of client rights when engaging in consultation/collaboration with other professionals.   |
|   | T26. Evaluate therapist's own mental, emotional, or physical problems/impairment to determine impact on ability to provide competent therapeutic services.                                 | K42. Knowledge of situations that indicate a need for consultation with colleagues or other professionals.<br>K46. Knowledge of problems/impairments that interfere with the process of providing therapeutic services.<br>K47. Knowledge of referrals and resources to assist in meeting the needs of clients.<br>K48. Knowledge of methods to facilitate transfer when referrals to other professionals are made.   |
|   | T27. Provide referrals to qualified professionals when adjunctive/alternate treatment would benefit the client.  | K41. Knowledge of limitations of professional experience, education, and training to determine issues outside scope of competence.<br>K43. Knowledge of ethical standards regarding the protection of client rights when engaging in consultation/collaboration with other professionals.<br>K47. Knowledge of referrals and resources to assist in meeting the needs of clients.<br>K48. Knowledge of methods to facilitate transfer when referrals to other professionals are made.   |
|   | T28. Manage therapist's personal values, attitudes, and/or beliefs to prevent interference with effective provision of therapeutic services and/or the therapeutic relationship.           | K49. Knowledge of the potential impact of therapist's personal values, attitudes, and/or beliefs on the therapeutic relationship.<br>K50. Knowledge of methods for managing the impact of therapist's personal values, attitudes, and/or beliefs on the client or the therapeutic relationship.   |

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| <i>Section</i>   | <i>Task Statement</i>  | <i>Knowledge Statement</i>   |
|--|--|--|
| <b>IIA. Professional Competence and Preventing Harm, Continued (18%)</b> | T29. Evaluate potential conflict of interest situations to determine the impact on the client or the therapeutic process.  | K51. Knowledge of conditions/situations that may impair judgment and/or lead to client exploitation.<br>K52. Knowledge of methods for managing boundaries and/or professional relationships with the client.<br>K53. Knowledge of methods for protecting the client and the therapeutic relationship in potential conflict of interest situations.   |
|  | T30. Maintain professional boundaries with client to prevent situations or relationships that may impair professional judgment and/or adversely impact the therapeutic relationship.   | K51. Knowledge of conditions/situations that may impair judgment and/or lead to client exploitation.<br>K52. Knowledge of methods for managing boundaries and/or professional relationships with the client.<br>K54. Knowledge of relationships that can be potentially detrimental to the client and/or the therapeutic relationship.<br>K55. Knowledge of methods to prevent impairment to professional judgment and/or client exploitation in situations where dual/multiple relationships are unavoidable. |
|  | T31. Adhere to ethical guidelines regarding sexual intimacy/contact with prospective, current, or former clients and/or client’s spouse, significant other, or family members to avoid causing harm or exploitation of the client. | K56. Knowledge of the potential for client harm or exploitation associated with sexual intimacy/contact between a client and therapist.<br>K57. Knowledge of ethical standards pertaining to sexual intimacy/contact with clients and/or client’s spouse, significant other, or family members.<br>K58. Knowledge of ethical standards regarding entering into a therapeutic relationship with former sexual partners.   |

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| <i>Section</i>                             | <i>Task Statement</i>   | <i>Knowledge Statement</i>   |
|--|---|--|
| <b>IIB. Therapeutic Relationship (27%)</b> | T32. Obtain informed consent by providing client with information regarding the therapist and the treatment process to facilitate client’s ability to make decisions.   | K59. Knowledge of the ethical responsibility to provide client with information regarding the therapeutic process.<br>K60. Knowledge of disclosures that facilitate client’s ability to make decisions regarding treatment.<br>K61. Knowledge of client’s right to autonomy and to make decisions regarding treatment.<br>K62. Knowledge of methods for communicating information pertaining to informed consent in a manner consistent with developmental and cultural factors.<br>K63. Knowledge of the right and responsibility of legal guardian/representative to make decisions on behalf of clients unable to make informed decisions.<br>K64. Knowledge of methods for protecting client’s welfare when client is unable to provide voluntary consent. |
|  | T33. Evaluate for concurrent psychotherapy the client is receiving with other therapist(s) to determine implications for entering into a new therapeutic relationship.  | K65. Knowledge of the effects of concurrent treatment relationships on the treatment process.<br>K66. Knowledge of ethical guidelines for providing concurrent psychotherapy.<br>K43. Knowledge of ethical standards regarding the protection of client rights when engaging in consultation/collaboration with other professionals.   |
|  | T34. Address confidentiality and/or therapeutic issues associated with therapist’s role, treatment modality, and/or involvement of third parties to protect the client’s welfare and/or the therapeutic relationship. | K67. Knowledge of methods to identify the “client” and the nature of relationships when providing therapy to more than one person.<br>K68. Knowledge of the impact of treatment unit, treatment modality, and/or involvement of multiple systems on confidentiality.<br>K69. Knowledge of methods to manage factors that impact the therapeutic relationship.<br>K70. Knowledge of methods to manage potential conflicts when providing concurrent therapy to more than one person.<br>K71. Knowledge of methods for managing confidentiality and privacy issues when providing treatment to more than one person.<br>K72. Knowledge of methods for managing confidentiality and privacy issues when treatment involves multiple systems or third parties.     |
|  | T35. Manage the impact of confidentiality/limits of confidentiality on the therapeutic relationship by discussing with the client issues/implications that arise during the therapeutic process.                      | K73. Knowledge of ethical standards regarding the management of confidentiality issues that arise in the therapeutic process.<br>K74. Knowledge of methods for managing the impact of confidentiality issues on the therapeutic relationship.  |

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|---|--|---|
| <b>IIB. Therapeutic Relationship, Continued (27%)</b> | T36. Manage the impact of safety and/or crisis situations by evaluating risk factors to protect the client/others.   | K75. Knowledge of methods for assessing level of potential danger or harm to client or others.<br>K76. Knowledge of ethical obligations regarding the management of safety needs.<br>K77. Knowledge of procedures for managing safety needs.  |
|   | T37. Manage the impact of legal and ethical obligations that arise during the therapeutic process to protect the client/therapist relationship.                            | K78. Knowledge of the impact of legal and ethical obligations on the therapeutic relationship.<br>K79. Knowledge of methods for protecting the best interest of the client in situations where legal and ethical obligations conflict.<br>K80. Knowledge of methods for protecting the best interest of the client in situations where agency and ethical obligations conflict.                         |
|   | T38. Manage diversity factors in the therapeutic relationship by applying and/or gaining knowledge and awareness necessary to provide treatment sensitive to client needs. | K81. Knowledge of diversity factors that potentially impact the therapeutic process.<br>K82. Knowledge of ethical standards regarding nondiscrimination.<br>K83. Knowledge of ethical standards for providing services congruent with client diversity.<br>K84. Knowledge of methods to gain knowledge, awareness, sensitivity, and skills necessary for working with clients from diverse populations. |
|   | T39. Provide treatment that respects client’s autonomy and right to make decisions.  | K85. Knowledge of the collaborative role between therapist and client in the therapeutic process.<br>K61. Knowledge of client’s right to autonomy and to make decisions regarding treatment.<br>K86. Knowledge of methods to assist client make decisions and understand consequences.  |
|   | T40. Advocate with and/or on behalf of the client with third party payers to assist client in accessing mental health care.  | K87. Knowledge of methods for evaluating client’s capacity to advocate on own behalf.<br>K88. Knowledge of ethical standards pertaining to interacting with third-party payers.   |



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|---|--|--|
| <b>IIB. Therapeutic Relationship, Continued (27%)</b> | T41. Maintain practice procedures that provide for consistent care in the event therapy must be interrupted or discontinued. | K89. Knowledge of ethical considerations and conditions for interrupting or terminating therapy.<br>K90. Knowledge of referrals/resources to provide consistent care in the event therapy must be interrupted or discontinued.<br>K48. Knowledge of methods to facilitate transfer when referrals to other professionals are made.                               |
|   | T42. Terminate therapy when no longer required or no longer benefits the client.   | K91. Knowledge of factors and/or conditions that indicate client is ready for termination of therapy.<br>K92. Knowledge of factors and/or conditions that indicate client is not benefiting from treatment.<br>K93. Knowledge of methods for managing the termination process.<br>K94. Knowledge of methods to prevent client abandonment and/or client neglect. |

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|---|--|--|
| <b>IIC. Business Practices and Policies (15%)</b> | T43. Advertise services by adhering to ethical guidelines regarding the use of accurate representations and information to promote services and/or expand practice.                              | K95. Knowledge of ethical guidelines regarding the use of accurate representation of qualifications and credentials in advertisements and/or solicitation of clients.<br>K96. Knowledge of ethical guidelines pertaining to the solicitation of testimonials or statements from clients or others.<br>K97. Knowledge of ethical guidelines regarding the recruitment of clients through employment and/or professional affiliations.   |
|   | T44. Maintain client records by adhering to ethical guidelines to document treatment and/or protect the client’s confidentiality.  | K98. Knowledge of ethical guidelines regarding the documentation of therapeutic services consistent with clinical practice.<br>K99. Knowledge of methods for providing reasonable protection of the confidentiality of client records.<br>K100. Knowledge of ethical guidelines for releasing client records upon request.   |
|   | T45. Clarify role(s) when acting in a professional capacity other than providing treatment or supervision to avoid confusion, maintain objectivity, and/or protect the therapeutic relationship. | K101. Knowledge of the ethical responsibility to clarify roles when acting in a professional capacity other than providing treatment or supervision.<br>K102. Knowledge of ethical guidelines regarding engaging in conflicting and/or dual roles.<br>K103. Knowledge of methods for maintaining impartiality and/or professional integrity when engaging in legal proceedings.  |
|   | T46. Implement policies/procedures that address ethical issues associated with the use of electronic media and technology in the course of providing therapy.                                    | K104. Knowledge of the potential for harm to the client or therapeutic relationship with the use of electronic media in the therapeutic process.<br>K105. Knowledge of ethical standards for interacting with clients via electronic media.<br>K106. Knowledge of the limitations and risks associated with electronic means of service delivery.  |
|   | T47. Maintain fee/payment policies that are commensurate with services provided and protect the therapeutic relationship.  | K107. Knowledge of methods and conditions for determining fees commensurate with professional services.<br>K108. Knowledge of prohibited business practices/forms of remuneration for making/accepting client referrals.<br>K109. Knowledge of the potential for client exploitation or harm that may result from bartering/exchanges for services.<br>K110. Knowledge of ethical standards pertaining to the collection of unpaid balances.<br>K111. Knowledge of ethical obligations regarding providing for continuation of treatment to the client.<br>K112. Knowledge of ethical guidelines regarding the provision of therapeutic services when interacting with third-party payers.<br>K47. Knowledge of referrals and resources to assist in meeting the needs of clients. |

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|---|---|---|
| <b>IIC. Business Practice and Policies, Continued (15%)</b> | T48. Adhere to ethical guidelines regarding the acceptance of gifts and/or tokens of appreciation from clients.   | K113. Knowledge of conditions/situations that may impair the integrity or efficacy of the therapeutic process.<br>K114. Knowledge of ethical standards regarding the acceptance of gifts from clients.  |
|   | T49. Adhere to ethical guidelines for protecting the welfare and dignity of participants when conducting research related to the provision of therapeutic services. | K115. Knowledge of procedures to safeguard participants when conducting research projects.<br>K116. Knowledge of disclosures required to inform participants of the nature and role of research projects.<br>K117. Knowledge of client rights regarding participation in research projects.<br>K118. Knowledge of methods for protecting client confidentiality and data when conducting research projects. |
|   | T50. Address unethical or incompetent conduct of colleague by taking action to promote the welfare and interests of clients.  | K119. Knowledge of conditions/situations that may impair the integrity or efficacy of the therapeutic process.<br>K120. Knowledge of guidelines for addressing unethical or incompetent conduct of colleagues.  |
|   | T51. Adhere to ethical guidelines for engaging in the supervisor/prelicensure practitioner relationship.  | K121. Knowledge of ethical guidelines governing the supervisor/prelicensure practitioner relationship and responsibilities.   |